



Library of Congress.

Chap. BV4541

Shelf L 3
1802

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

247

A LATE
LETTER
FROM A
SOLICITOUS MOTHER
TO HER ONLY
SON,
BOTH LIVING IN
NEW ENGLAND. —

THE ELEVENTH EDITION.

NEWBURYPORT:
PRINTED AND SOLD BY ANGIER MARCH.
1802.

BY 4541

L3

1802

A

L E T T E R, &c.

MY DEAR CHILD !

WHAT frame these lines will find you in I know not, but I can assure you they are the overflowings of a heart full of motherly affection to you, and tender concern for your best interest of soul and body, for time and eternity. I trust it is from God that I am inclined to get this letter writ, and that his blessed spirit will direct in the inditing of it, and accompany the same in his own good time to your heart. If it should not make so deep an impression at present, yet you will lay it up carefully, and the time may come when some of the last counsels of your aged dying mother will seem quite otherwise to you than they have hitherto done. I mean if God should spare your life till I am removed from you by death, which is utterly uncertain, though I have reason to look for my great change every day. But O how happy should I reckon myself, what reason would I have to adore the infinite riches of free grace and mercy, if mine eyes might see the salvation of God in your conversion before I see death ! O ! methinks I should catch you in my withered arms, and cry out with good old SIMEON, Now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace ! yea, I do not know but I should die with excessive joy at such an unspeakable mercy.

But I must wait upon God, and be reconciled to his sovereign will, though he should never see cause to grant me such a favour in this world, nay, though he should take you away by some sudden and awful stroke, and leave

leave me no grounds at all to hope but that you were gone directly down to everlasting burnings. Aaron and David, and many others better far than myself, have had such trials. And hope through grace, I should be enabled to hold my pace, though it would be far worse than death to me. I think the mighty power of God has brought me to submission in a case that came nearer to me than even the salvation of my own immortal soul. I trust I have been made willing to acknowledge his justice and righteousness, if he should cast me into hell, and have desired that I might never have a hard thought of him there; but still resolved to be in the use of all means, and to seek and strive for mercy as long as I had life and breath; knowing that it would not be worse with me if I should never obtain; and I was terribly afraid I never should. I thought I did not know enough to be saved.

But it was not long after I was brought to this resigned frame of spirit, before the Lord was pleased to manifest himself graciously and marvellously to me, and to assure me of his everlasting love to my soul. O! my thoughts were swallowed up with the love of God in Christ. And how did I admire free grace! free grace, that God should ever cast an eye of pity on such a vile, guilty ignorant creature, who I thought did not know enough to be saved: Oh, I was filled brim full of light, and love and joy and admiration; such as I have no words to express; or if I had my dear child, you could never conceive of it, nor the one thousandth part of it. All the comfort I have ever had in all worldly enjoyments and relations was nothing when compared with that joy unspeakable and full of glory which I was then filled with from one day and week to another. And I trust it had a transforming effect upon my soul. While I beheld as in a glass with open face, the glory of the Lord, I was I hope, in some measure changed into the same image from glory to glory, as by the spirit of the Lord. My affections were taken off

from

from earthly objects, and set on things above, where Christ is. O Christ was then precious to me, I saw him to be what he really is, the chieftest of ten thousand and altogether lovely. Sin became inexpressibly odious to me. I mourned for it as for a first born and an only Son. I have experienced what sorrow is for an only son, and may again. My next concern was for my parents and my yoke fellow; and O how did I long for their conversion and salvation, and the salvation of every body, O methought I longed that every poor soul should come to Christ; for I saw there was enough in him for the whole world if they would but come to him, and that he was freely willing to accept of them, able and willing to save every one that would come to him. I speak freely to you my dear child, for the spirit of God (which I trust I am in some degree though most unworthy, made a partaker of) is a free spirit. And out of the abundance of the heart the mouth will speak, especially to those we ardently love. And though I fear you will not now much relish these things yet you may through infinite grace have a new taste given to you, and then your poor mother's relation of her experiences will be sweeter to you than honey and the honey comb; and then you will (perhaps too late) wish for an opportunity of conversing freely with me about the things of God, and would be willing to travel many miles for such an opportunity though all in vain. Or if you should never have a divine taste (which is a shocking and amazing supposition, good had it been for you that you had never been born, if that should be your case) yet your children or others may read these lines long hence to their comfort and edification, and God may be glorified in the world for what he has done for my soul, when I shall be through rich free grace praising him in perfection with the spirits of just men made perfect, and the holy angels above. I cannot but hope this will be my eternal employment, notwithstanding the many weaknesses - sinful infirmities and short comings, I am chargeable with here.

I have

I have too much left my first love, and in too great a measure lost that lively sense I once had of spiritual and eternal things; but yet I trust my heart has been right with God in the main. I have through grace loved the habitation of his house, and the place where his honour dwells; and he has graciously been pleased very often to draw near to my soul in his word and ordinances; and then I could say with holy DAVID, one day in thy courts is better than a thousand elsewhere. Many a gracious visit have I poor unworthy creature, been favoured with from my saviour, in the meeting-house where I usually attended, and at places of public worship in other parishes: though once I was apt to think I never should be so sensible of God's presence any where else; as I had been under the ministry of our own dear pastor. I have found by my own comfortable experience, that God is not confined to one place or instrument; but can when and where and by what means he pleases, draw near to his poor children, and revive and comfort their souls.

I have been exercised with grievous trials and afflictions, but the Lord has not left me destitute of his supporting and comforting presence. He has been with me in six troubles, and in seven, and in particular, in that distressing visitation the death of my only son, I was at first almost quite overwhelmed and much discomposed my passions wrought and were tempestuous. I was like a wild bull in a net, but at last the LORD was pleased to shew me his sovereignty, how he had an uncontrollable right to do what he pleased with all his creatures, and that composed and calmed my spirit, and when I was brought to a thorough submission, God was pleased to comfort my heart, and to give me a full persuasion that my loss should be made up, and that he would give me another son; and it was unto me according to my faith. The Lord did visit me mercifully, and gave me a son which I took as a token of his love, and I trust was humbly thankful for and through mer-

ey he has been continued to this day. I have had the satisfaction of seeing him to be endowed with sense and reason, and enjoy a plentiful estate and with a virtuous yoke fellow and desirable children : all which I acknowledge are great favours, and what I am utterly unworthy of and ought to be humbly thankful for ; but yet I am not satisfied with all this : there is one thing yet lacking I fear in order to complete my comfort in my only son. I fear he has not yet secured the one thing needful, even that good part which shall never be taken away from him. What will it profit him to gain the whole world and lose his own soul ? riches profit not in the day of wrath, but righteousness delivereth from death. O my dear child ! I would address you in the words of King Lemuel's mother to him, Prov. 31. 2. What my son ? And what the son of my womb ? What the son of my vows ? &c. Can I bear the thought that the son that was given me in answer to my prayers, my only son that I bore with so much pain, that I have nursed and brought up with so much care and tenderness night and day, the son that I have so many times prayed and wept over, and counselled and warned ; that this beloved son I say, should be the possession and property of the devil, should serve him all his days here, and be miserable as he is and with him in hell fire forever ? How can I bear to think of that dreadful day when I shall see my poor and undone child, if he turn not speedily and thoroughly, stand trembling before the judgment seat of Christ, his face gathering blackness ; horror anguish and despair staring through his eyelids, to hear that amazing sentence pronounced on him, Depart ye cursed, &c. — To see him seized by mighty angels bound hand and foot with everlasting chains, and cast into a dreadful lake of fire, and the adamantine gates shut and bar'd by him that shutteth, and no man opens ? Such thoughts as these are ready to tear my heart in pieces, though I know if I be so happy as to find mercy of the Lord in that day, I shall have no painful sympathy with you, but

but shall rather rejoice that God's justice and power will be forever glorified in your condemnation. But how will your heart endure? How can your hands be strong? I know you have often heard these things, and had them set forth before you in a far more affecting manner than it is possible for me to represent them; and I know withal, that if I had been in the other world, and seen the terrors and glories of hell and heaven with my bodily eyes, and were come back again with the tongue of an angel to speak of them to you it would have no saving effect. If you hear not Moses and the prophets neither would you be persuaded though one rose from the dead. And I know too that if the good spirit of God is pleased to accompany a few of my last words to your heart, they will do you more good than all you have ever heard in your life before. You know by sad and long experience how little all the best means signify without the powerful co-operation of God's spirit; and you also know by some experience how means work; how a person feels when the word is set home upon the soul by the spirit in a way of conviction and terror: O that you also knew what his work in regeneration is! what I am aiming at is, to make you sensible how much your dependence is on the sovereign and free spirit of God. The life and death of your precious soul is in his hand; and he acts with an absolute liberty, like the wind which bloweth where and when it listeth; and seeing it is thus, I would fain have you think solemnly how much it concerns you to take heed you do not provoke the spirit finally to forsake you, for then your case is as bad and worse you know, than if you were in hell. This I hope and trust is not yet your case; if I knew it were I should have nothing to say to you more about your soul, unless it were to caution you not to fill up a greater measure of sin than needs must, and so encrease your treasure of wrath against the day of wrath: but I hope better things concerning you, and things that accompany a possibility of salvation. I trust your day of grace

grace is not yet over, and that the spirit of grace has not yet finally left you. And O for your soul's sake, do nothing to grieve him away. Lay aside every weight and the sin that so easily besets you ; I need not tell you what it is : conscience points you to it, while you are reading these lines, if it be not asleep. Do my dear child ! stir up yourself, shake off sloth and discouragement, and get up and be doing. You do not know how soon a merciful God who delights not in the death of a sinner, but had rather he should turn and live may appear for you, and work effectually on your soul.

I am ready to fear sometimes that you are tempted to give way to desperate discouragements : To say with those in Jeremiah—There is no hope : no : but we have loved strangers and after them we will go, That you are ready to think you have sat so long under the powerful means of grace, and have neglected so many counsels and warnings and examples; especially in the late glorious time and have stifled so many convictions, that now there is no hope for you, you had even as good take what comfort you can in this world, and trouble yourself no more about another, or at least that it will signify nothing for you to use any means in your present dead, dull frame, till the spirit of God comes more powerfully upon you. But. O dear child ! this is delusion all over. Methinks the adversary appears plain, in open sight, as an angel of darkness, in such a temptation as this. O do not hearken to that old deceiver and murderer of souls, but realize it that the very reverse of all that he suggests to you is the truth. O say within yourself :

“ No, I will not hearken to any of these insinuations, I will not cast away an immortal soul at this rate ; I must be saved ; I can't bear to perish forever and the more sad and dangerous my case is, the more speedy and earnest I will be in seeking out for help, behold now is the accepted time, behold now is the day of salvation ! If I have lost many precious opportunities and advantages I

will lose no more. Is my heart very hard and senseless, I will do nothing to make it more so; I will keep out of that company, I will resist those temptations that have been too hard for me. If I cannot do as others do, or as I once could, by reason of the withdraw of God's spirit from me, yet I will do as well as I can. If I cannot pray with the spirit, yet I will pray for the spirit. If I cannot have any comfort in religion and the duties of it, yet I will attend them as a task and a burden, till the Lord shall please to give me a better heart. And before I will take no satisfaction in sin and the world, while my case is so dismal with respect to eternity. And indeed how is it possible I should take comfort in any thing while I am in this condition, without I was more hard hearted and desperate than the very devils, who believe and tremble? How can I relish any worldly em- ployment, or taste any sweetness therein, when I have this thought in my mind, that I swallow down the curse of God with every drop and morsel that I take in. That for every drop of mercy I receive from God, and do not improve it for his glory, there is a drop of wrath drop'd into those viols which are shortly to be poured out upon me in eternal vengeance. So much as I have glorified myself and lived deliciously, so much sorrow and torment will be given to me. I will therefore, by God's help, bestir myself. I would think of and improve all the en- couragements I have left me. I am yet in the land of the living; there is yet hope concerning me, many thou- sands of prayers have been made for me, and more of late than ever. My near and dear relations, friends and neighbours have been many of them coming in to Christ, and I have reason to think they have been and are cry- ing to God continually on my behalf, and he is a prayer- hearing God. He has not said to the seed of Jacob, seek ye my face in vain. I will believe in hope against hope. It may be the Lord is still ready to be gracious to me, has his hands full of all the blessings of the cove- nant of grace, that I so much need, and am perishing for want

want of, and only waits till I ask for them. So he tells me in his own word, Matt. vii. 7, &c. and in many other texts, which I have been often minded of.

Some such language I would fain imagine I over-hear you breathing out in your solitary hours, and may the father of mercies hear your meditation ! May he come by his blessed spirit, and while you are thus musing cause the fire to burn in your soul, thoroughly awaken, convince, humble, convert and sanctify you. Amen ! Amen ! Lord grant this for thy dear Son's sake, Amen !

And now, hoping and trusting that you will no longer delay and trifle with a great and jealous God, an immortal soul, and a never-ending eternity, but will speedily set about and will never rest a moment till you have made thorough work of turning to God, I shall conclude my long, and I am afraid tedious letter with a word of council and advice to you, on supposition that the Lord should be so infinitely merciful as to hear the prayers of your friends for you and of your own for yourself, and should give you good hope through grace, that he has wrought the saving change in your soul. And here again I beg you will take these as the last words of your dying mother, and which are the copy of her very heart and soul, as it now works towards you her dear only Son.

If then you shall be so inexpressibly happy as to receive the Lord Jesus into your heart by faith, O be careful to walk in him. You must be continually coming to him every day and hour of your life. You must live upon him every moment. He must be your life, your light, your joy, your trust, your wisdom, righteousness, sanctification, and every thing. You must never rest without daily communion with him, and communication from him. If he withdraw from you at any time, and hide his face, you must mourn after him and seek him sorrowing, and let nothing else content or satisfy you. The world will on that occasion be making its court to you again, but O you must reject it with indignation. Say to your old idols, get ye hence. Resolve that

that if you cannot have comfort in Christ, you will have it in nothing. I must only give a broken hint or two, you will have many better counsellors than your poor mother; but I presume you will take particular notice of what comes from her, I know you will do so if you ever come to have your eyes open, and it is with that hope that I now say what I do.—You must live to Christ, and for him, as well as live upon him. If ever you truly believe in him, you will give up all you are and have and can do unto him, and you will not only wait to know how he would have you dispose of all for him. You will consider yourself as a steward of what God gives you, and you will be bountiful and liberal to such as you know the Lord has made his receivers. You must live in love: this is the fulfilling of the law, as much as in you lies; you must be peaceably with all men, and do good to all, especially the household of faith.—But I shall say all in one word; make the word of God, and the wise and holy servants of God, your constant counsellors, under the influences of the spirit of God in all your affairs, spiritual and temporal, and do nothing dubious and of importance without their advice and approbation.

I break off my dear child! and leaving you with a God infinitely able and willing to do for you above what I can ask or think.

I subscribe myself,

your most affectionate and.

SOLICITOUS MOTHER.

FINIS.

THE ADVANTAGES OF EARLY RELIGION,

oooooooo

HAPPY's the child whose youngest years,
 Receive instruction well ;
 Who hates the sinner's paths, and fears
 The road that leads to hell.

When we devote our youth to God,
 'Tis pleasing in his eyes ;
 A flower when offer'd in the bud
 Is no vain sacrifice.

'Tis easier work when we begin
 To fear the Lord betimes ;
 While sinners that grow old in sin,
 Are hardened in their crimes.

'Twill save us from a thousand snares,
 To mind religion young :
 Grace will preserve our following years,
 And make our virtue strong.

To thee, Almighty God, to thee,
 Our childhood we resign ;
 'Twill please us to look back and see
 That our whole lives were thine.

Let the sweet work of prayer and praise,
 Employ my youngest breath ;
 Thus I'm prepar'd for longer days,
 Or fit for early death.

—

THOUGHTS ON GOD AND DEATH.

verses

THREE is a God that reigns above,
Lord of the heaven and earth and seas,
I fear his wrath, I ask his love,
And with my lips I sing his praise.

There is a law which he has writ,
To teach us all what we must do;
My soul to his commands submit,
For they are holy just and true.

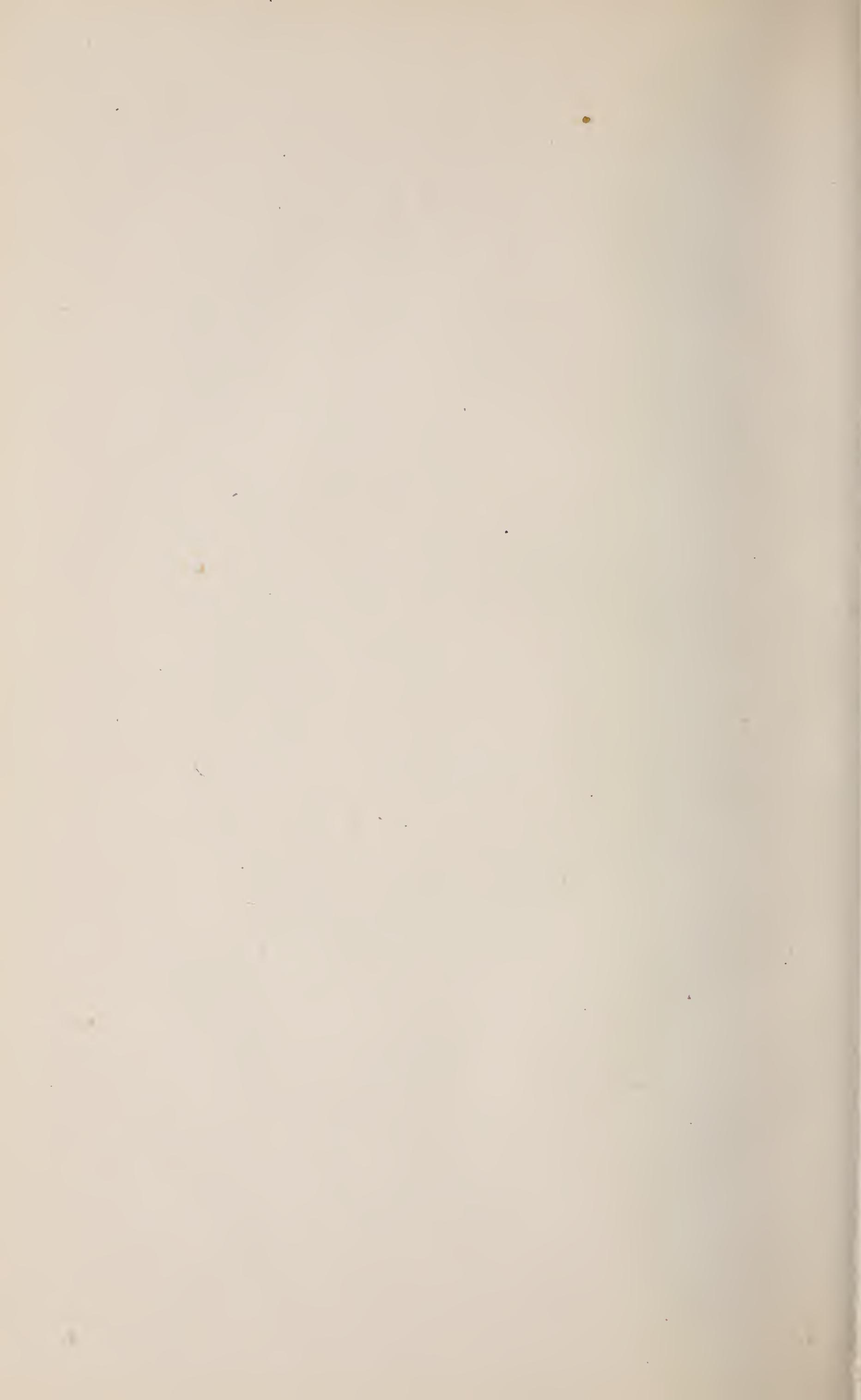
There is a gospel of rich grace,
Whence sinners all their comforts draw,
Lord I repent, and seek thy face,
For I have often broke thy law.

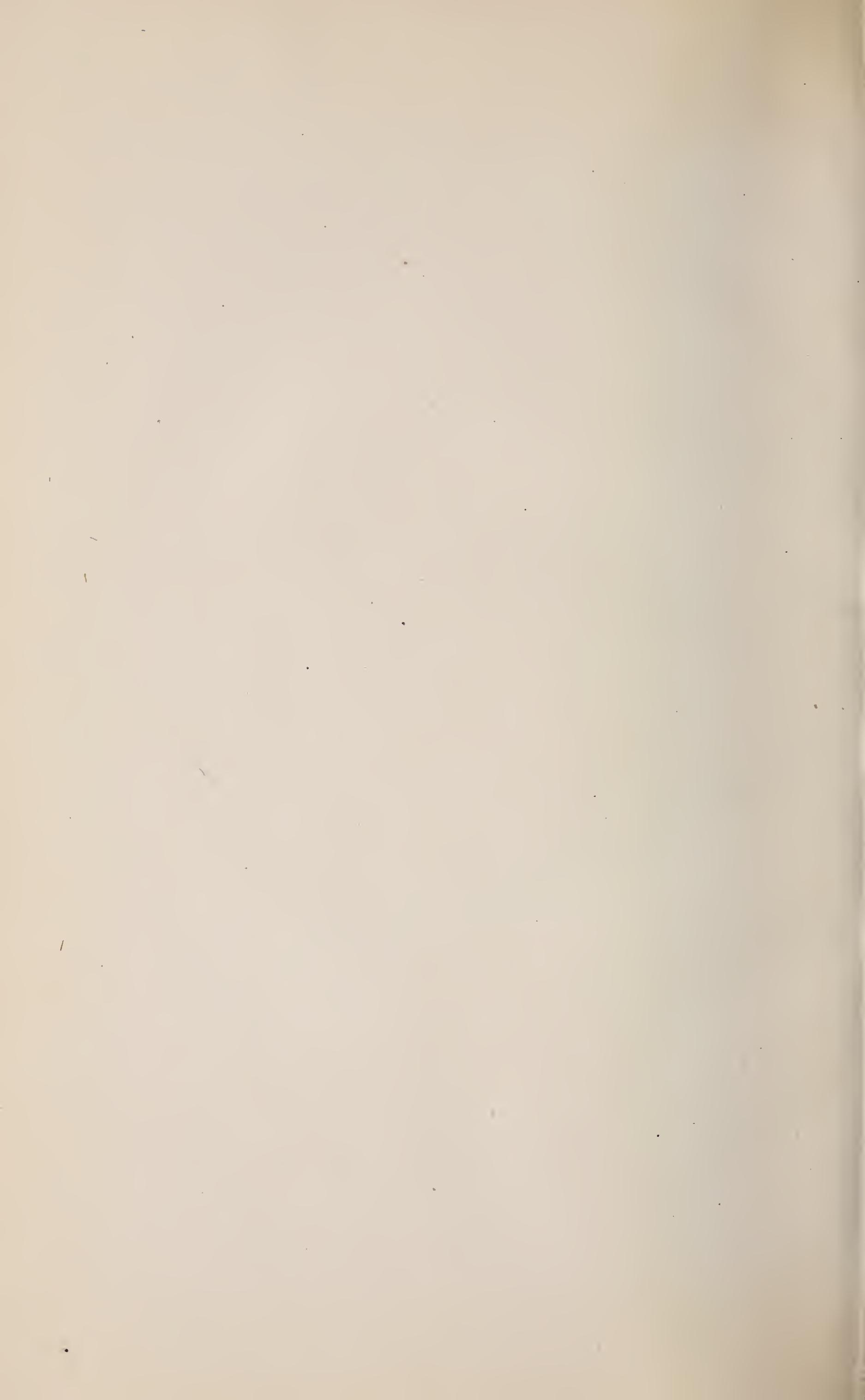
There is an hour when I must die,
Nor do I know how soon 'twill come;
A thousand children young as I,
Are call'd by death to hear their doom.

Let me improve the hours I have,
Before the day of grace is fled;
There's no repentance in the grave,
Nor pardon offer'd to the death.

Just as a tree cut down that fell
To North or Southward there it lies;
So man departs to heaven or hell,
Fix'd in the state wherein he dies.

THE END.



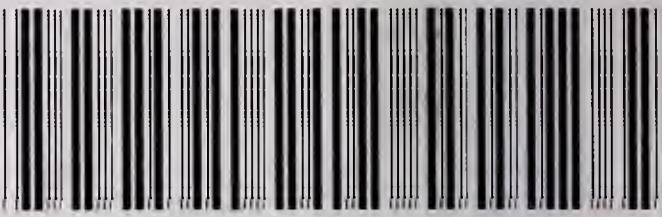


Deacidified using the Bookkeeper process.
Neutralizing agent: Magnesium Oxide
Treatment Date: Nov. 2005

Preservation Technologies
A WORLD LEADER IN PAPER PRESERVATION
111 Thomson Park Drive
Cranberry Township, PA 16066
(724) 779-2111

354
L

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS



0 016 063 444 3

